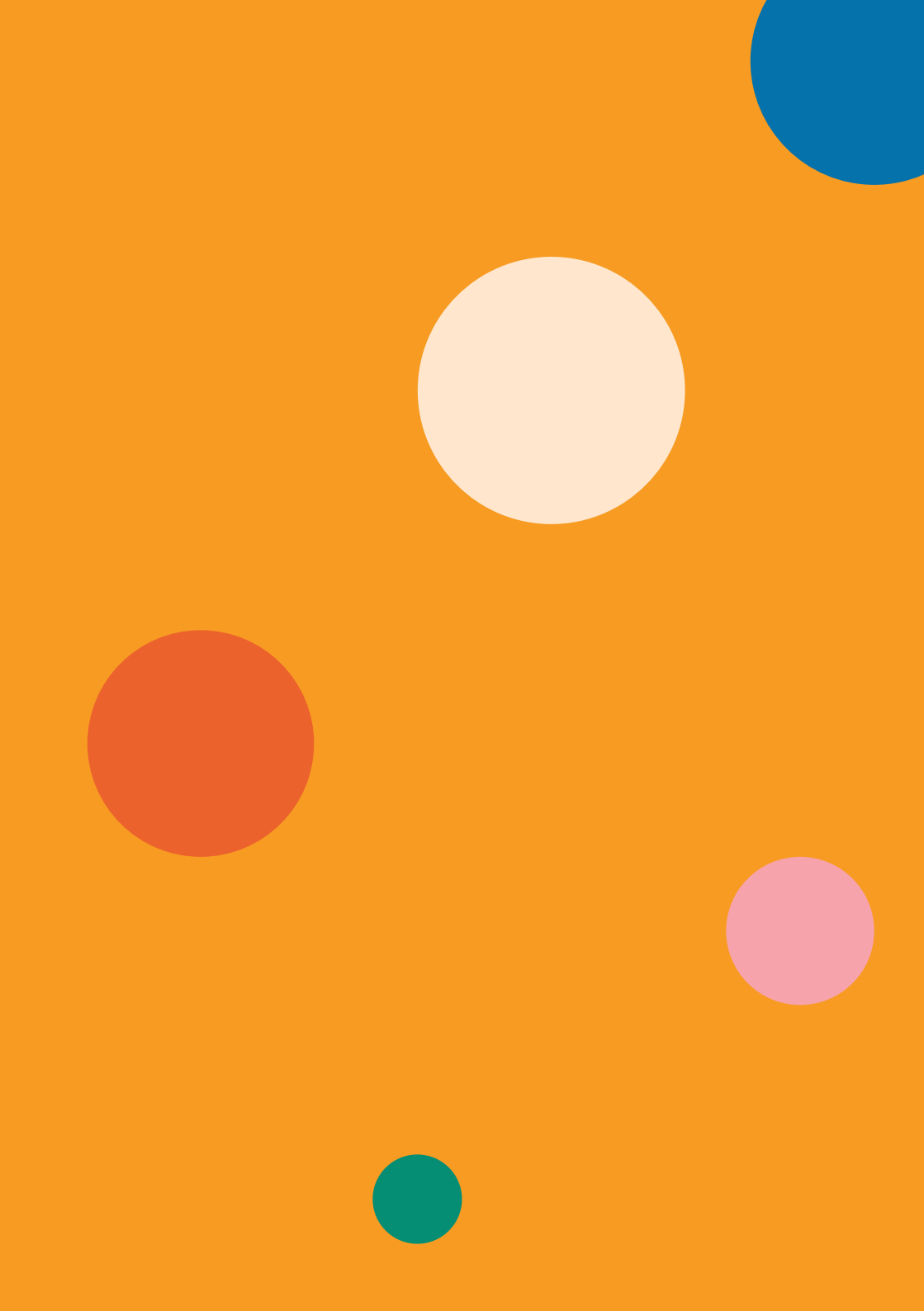
DESIGNING OUR FUTURE

THE SEED *for* TRANSFORMATION



CONTENTS

Word of the Curator 4

Re-Imagining Futures Together 6

Imagining Tomorrow 8

COA Future Olympians Aruba 10

Poverty Exchange 12

Conscious Travel Aruba 14

Digital Literacy Curriculum 16

A Mirror of Possibilities 18

Weaving Our Own Silos 20

Threads of Memory, Visions of Tomorrow 23

Un Mucha Di Jamanota Y Su Musica 28

From Streets to Stories 31

The Aruba Youth Media Lab 33

Message from UNESCO Aruba 36

WORD OF THE CURATOR

Being the curator of the Futures Day Publication has been one of the most eye-opening and creatively challenging experiences of my life. It tested my abilities not just as a student or intern, but as a creator and storyteller. For the first time, I had to trust my own vision, make creative decisions, and lead something that represents the voices of many. It pushed me beyond what I thought I was capable of, and somewhere along the way, I discovered a new kind of confidence.

This publication is a youth-driven showcase of what Aruban young people are creating, imagining, and building for tomorrow. But even though it comes from the youth, it is not only for the youth. I want it to speak to everyone: parents, educators, artists, and anyone who believes in the power of imagination. That sense of inclusion is important to me. It's why the visual and writing choices in this publication are designed to feel accessible and warm. I myself have signs of dyslexia, and I understand how overwhelming traditional layouts can be. So from the beginning, I wanted this publication to feel open, clear, and welcoming, not as a selling point, not as a label, but simply as a reflection of who we are and what we value in 2025: accessibility, creativity, and care for all readers.

Still, behind every page and design choice lies a journey that wasn't always easy. Every detail, from deciding which voices to highlight to shaping the overall narrative, came with moments of doubt and self-reflection. It's natural to want to include everything when you see how much talent and creativity live on this island. But part of curating means accepting that you must work within your means: the time, tools, and the capacity you have at that moment. In many ways, this publication became a time capsule of what was possible with the resources available to me, a reflection not just of Aruba's creative voices but of my own growth and limitations. I learned to make peace with imperfection, to trust my creative instincts, and to remind myself that every choice made was the right one for the moment. Creativity isn't about having endless options; it's about making meaning with what you have.

I also had the privilege of collaborating with young voices and passionate individuals across different sectors, each bringing their own perspective and spark. I learned from professionals with years of experience in education and culture, whose guidance helped me see how creativity, youth engagement, and policy intersect. These interactions taught me how to listen, adapt, and grow. It reminded me that learning doesn't end in the classroom; it happens in every conversation, every challenge, and every shared moment. Together, these collaborations created something bigger than any one of us: a portrait of Aruba's creativity, resilience, and evolving identity.

Studying abroad gave me perspective, but returning home gave me appreciation. Growing up, many of us feel that we have to leave our island to find opportunity. Yet stepping away made me realize how much potential already lives here, how many gifted minds and creative hearts are building something meaningful on our own shores. Through this publication, I want to celebrate that. Aruba is small, but it is vast in imagination.

Creating this publication has also taught me that imagining the future can be both exciting and frightening. The future is something none of us can fully control; it's inevitable, unpredictable, and often uncertain. You can plan and prepare, but life rarely unfolds exactly as expected. There were moments in this project when things took longer, shifted direction, or required more patience than I had planned. But that, too, is part of the process and the beauty of it. The future, like creativity, isn't about perfection or control; it's about resilience, trust, and learning to move with change. What I've come to understand is that the journey itself is what shapes us. Future thinking isn't about knowing exactly what will happen; it's about daring to imagine, to create, and to become. This project reminded me that no one truly has it all figured out; we are all learning, growing, and evolving together. The future is something we should hold collectively, shaping it with empathy, creativity, and courage. And perhaps that's what it truly means to "become" to grow into the version of ourselves and the world that we can be proud of.

Nihayla Meyers
Designing our Future(S) 2025

Re-Imagining Futures Together

In the realm of design fiction, lies the opportunity of Anticipatory Governance.

At the intersection of Reality and Imagination we find the opportunity to discover, define, design and deliver, through the force of creativity, endless scenarios and possibilities for desirable futures. It is through dystopian and utopian borders that we find ourselves at the center of oceans of human behavior connecting and disconnecting lives, designing and disrupting futures. When we encounter these (un)imaginative realities and use collective capacities to (re)design patterns, behaviors and strings in favor of humanity, we empower the futures ahead of us to fulfill the promise of a better world for generations to come.

The versatility of co-creation has the potential to emerge new literacies, communities and societies by co-design and co-creation's that are still unseen and yet imagined by the minds and hearts of emerging designers. In 2024 the course Futures Literacy for Systemic Impact was presented in the form of a Futures Lab at The University of Aruba. The focus was on stimulating Designability through Futures Thinking by empowering our youth to collaborate, co-create and co-design their most desirable futures. More than a course, this space was home to the creation of life itself through collective efforts and endless design knowledge as an acumen of the diversity and multiculturality that so much represents our lovely island Aruba.

As extended efforts Futures Literacy was also seeded in our communities as a life skill through an UNESCO participation program in the minds of our local communities, federations and NGOs as our pledge to leaving better realities behind. It is through foresight and scenario planning as catalysators for anticipatory governance that we guide collective social transformation and co-create desirable futures together. The honesty of design fiction creates the designed spaces for social justice and social innovation to guide the way towards societal impact.

However, no voiced futures will see ray of light, if its waves and echoes are not carried by the generations that will be left behind to face them. Therefore this publication is designed to serve the purpose of elevating our youth in their efforts to co-design and co-create desirable futures for themselves and their communities as part of their efforts to induce collective societal growth, together.

Stephanie G.D. Croes
Social Designer & Futurist
Emerging Communities Foundation (Emerging2050)

Imagining Tomorrow

(by the youth, for the youth)

The following projects were designed by students from the Academic Foundation Year at the University of Aruba, utilizing future-thinking principles. Each project represents the spirit of imagining Aruba's future through the lens of young people, reflecting their voices, creativity, and values. Using future thinking principles, these projects explore the needs and dreams of tomorrow. The criteria were simple yet meaningful: **innovation, local relevance, creativity, and long-term impact.** These students followed an 8-week program during which they expanded their creativity through various sessions, designing their project, creating personas, and connecting real-life experiences to their future aspirations. There were different methods used for these projects, ranging from *STEEP analysis, Systems Map, Design Thinking, Persona creation, Foresight methodologies and Design Fiction.*

COA

This project, based on the Committee Olympico Arubano, highlights the COA's purpose to develop and enhance Aruba's sports environment by supporting and funding athletes and creating more exposure for them. Another important task of the COA is to make the community more connected to sports in general and increase sports participation. Using the STEEP model, the project focused on social factors, including community engagement and cultural relevance, as well as technological factors such as digital platforms and training innovations, and economic factors, including funding challenges and tourism-sport synergy.

This analysis highlights opportunities across all dimensions. Key priorities include leveraging social media, addressing funding challenges, engaging youth, focusing on eco-friendly practices, and advocating for government and business support. By addressing these areas, COA can create a holistic and sustainable sports system that benefits athletes and elevates Aruba's presence on the global sports scene stage.

The general solution for improving COA lies in addressing key challenges such as funding, athlete support, and community engagement through strategic initiatives. COA can diversify funding by launching sponsorship tiers, crowdfunding campaigns, and merchandise sales while creating incentives for local businesses to invest in sports. Athlete development can be enhanced by forming partnerships with international training academies, offering access to sports science resources, and prioritizing mental health support. Community involvement can grow through grassroots programs in schools, annual sports festivals, and better storytelling via social media to inspire and engage the public. ***By aligning these efforts with sustainable practices and leveraging global collaborations, COA can build a thriving sports culture, elevate athlete performance, and establish Aruba as a respected name in international sports.***

Harianny Abreu, Tayrhin Lourens, Maresha Tromp, Djaydrick Hernandez, Wyndel Beyde

Poverty Exchange

This project is centered on poverty as its central theme. Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic needs, including food, clothing, and shelter. However, poverty is much more than just not having enough money. Poverty has an influence on the social aspect, such as being cut off from key institutions and resources that could help one escape poverty. For this project, there were seven identified key actors through a **system map:**
• Government: The government is the one that is implementing policies that address poverty.
• Businesses: Businesses can contribute by providing jobs.
• Educational Institutions: Schools and universities can offer programs that provide education to help individuals gain the skills needed to improve their economic situation.
• Health Care: Access to affordable health care for people in poverty.
• Community: Mobilize resources and support for those in need.
• People in poverty: People in poverty also need to do their best to get out of poverty.
• Media: Can help to shape public opinion about people living in poverty.

From this cycle, a new idea began to grow, a system where people could trade their skills instead of money. A mother who loved gardening could tend to someone's plants in exchange for tutoring her children. A man handy with tools could repair a fence or clean a home and receive food or clothes in return.

The government would support this system through policies that encourage eco-friendly skill exchanges, helping families gain access to education, healthcare, and dignity — all while caring for the planet.

At the heart of the program would be a community center, a safe place where people could stay, learn, and work. Each day, they'd attend lessons on sustainable living and career skills, from recycling to energy conservation. After completing their training, participants could continue their education at partner schools for a reduced fee.

This system would do more than meet daily needs; it would nurture independence, protect the environment, and give every person a chance to build a better, greener future.

Tirzah-Marie Regales

Conscious Travel Aruba

Sustainable tourism refers to the application of sustainable practices within the tourism sector. Aruba is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, which leads to over-tourism, depletion of natural resources, and strain on our water resources. Additionally, it also causes excessive waste and leads to the deterioration of Aruban landmarks. ***This project aimed to research sustainable tourism and identify safe ways for tourists to enjoy Aruba without causing damage.***

The main problem is that Aruba's tourism levels have reached a point where the island's natural resources are being depleted, and Aruban culture is being Americanized. This can be seen especially in Palm Beach, where big brand restaurants and hotels have set up shop with the owners of these establishments being foreign. Aruban culture is not being prioritized and this can lead to a loss of knowledge of Aruban culture meanwhile American culture is being sold. Moreover, because of the high numbers of tourists, more hotels and condominiums are being built which can cause serious damage to our land and local wildlife.

The solution: This project's solution consists of a website and/or app that can be utilized in diverse ways such as assisting our customers in finding the nearest recycling bins and **Reverse Vending Machines.** What are Reverse Vending Machines? Reverse Vending Machines are a way for people to put empty recyclable bottles in an automated machine and get a refund back such as cash, store credit, or vouchers. Some of the establishments that participate are Superfood, Ling and Sons, and Renaissance Marketplace. Moreover, our app also collaborates with eco-friendly hotels to inform our customers about resorts that are conscious of their carbon footprint.

In the end, this story comes together through a single, powerful tool: the app. With just a glance, users can follow a live GPS system that reveals which devices are full and which need attention, keeping recycling effortless and efficient. Beyond convenience, the website becomes a space for discovery, a place where people can learn the "why" and "how" of recycling, explore sustainable practices, and find inspiration from eco-conscious hotels and restaurants. A new rating system gives these establishments the chance to shine, earning recognition for saving water, using clean energy, and embracing green initiatives. And perhaps most rewarding of all, every user can see the difference they're making; the amount of CO_2 saved, proof that every small action adds up. In this way, the app doesn't just track progress; it tells the story of a community working together for a cleaner, more sustainable world.

Amira Salie, Amaranda Tromp, Stacey Trimon

Digital Literacy Curriculum

The problem had been quietly growing for years. Across the world, people were being nudged, shaped, and sometimes deceived by algorithms they didn't understand. Misleading headlines spread faster than truth, and digital platforms left largely unregulated, allowing confusion to bloom. Fact-checkers did what they could, policymakers fumbled for solutions, and platform engineers understood the mechanics but not the mandate to change them. The fight against misinformation was crowded, yet strangely fragmented, each actor holding only part of the solution.

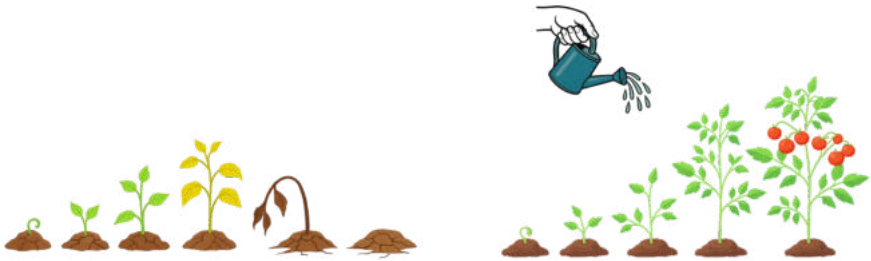
In the midst of this, a new idea emerged: a **Digital Literacy Curriculum** designed not as a patch but as a foundation. The goal was simple but ambitious: to empower students early on with the tools to navigate a chaotic digital world. Instead of letting misinformation wash over them, students would learn how to question sources, understand how algorithms shape their feeds, and trace the ripple effects of falsehoods across society.

The curriculum would not live in isolation. It would weave naturally into subjects like social studies, language arts, and science, inviting students to investigate real examples of misinformation, fact-check viral posts, and even design their own mini-campaigns against false narratives. These activities would make critical thinking second nature rather than an abstract skill.

In guiding students through these hands-on experiences, the program aims to do more than sharpen analytical skills. It seeks to strengthen their sense of agency. By learning to spot misleading claims and challenge manipulative content, young people would grow into citizens equipped to protect themselves and their communities.

Kyriana de Cuba, Maartje Taylor, Jadziah Boyé, Deevah Croes

A MIRROR OF POSSIBILITIES



Together, these four projects paint a hopeful vision of the Aruba we want to build: one that is sustainable, inclusive, creative, and deeply connected to both people and place. They are not just student projects; they are living seeds of change, each carrying within them the possibility of what tomorrow could become if we choose to nurture it.

Each idea reflects a different side of who we are as an island: our resilience, our generosity, our imagination, and our unwavering love for the land we call home. They remind us that innovation does not always come from grand institutions or distant experts, but often from the hearts of young people who dare to look at the world differently and ask, “What if?”

The Futures Day publication is more than a collection of projects; it’s a mirror of possibility. It invites us to pause and imagine the kind of future we want to leave behind, not only for the next generation but with them. It challenges us to see that the future is not waiting somewhere far away. It is already being built in classrooms, in conversations, in acts of care and creativity happening today.

These projects show us that shaping the future begins with small but courageous steps: rethinking how we travel, how we connect, how we learn, and how we play. They remind us that true change starts when imagination meets action when ideas move from paper into the world.

To the youth who brainstormed, debated, and ultimately chose the four final projects your voices shaped this publication. Opinions differed, ideas collided, and that is the beauty of it. True youth engagement is not about agreement, it is about participation. The power came not from the final selection, but from the courage of young people to speak up, to express their priorities, and to help shape the future they imagine.

Samantha Aponte, Andrea Contreras, Genard Deluvia, Karyme Acosta, Ashley Provence & Channel Anderson

This is the heart of Futures Day: imagining a better future, acting together, and believing that the future is something we can shape, not through fear or obligation, but through courage, compassion, and creativity. It's a reminder that even the smallest idea, when nurtured with hope and collaboration, can grow into something powerful enough to transform the way we live, think, and dream.

Weaving Our Own Silos was written in response to the four guiding questions. For Marillis, the most effective way to address those questions was through poetry. Each numeral corresponds to one of the four inquiries, and together they weave language, reflection, and emotion as a means of thinking aloud.

This piece is born from love for Aruba, its people, and the pulse that shapes us. However, if we do not cultivate our communication and the stories we choose to tell or remain silent about in our communities, our governance, and our needs, we do a disservice to the future we envision. "**Weaving Our Own Silos**" serves as both a reflection and a reminder that the strength of what we build depends on how we share, listen to, and carry each other's stories forward.

Weaving Our Own Silos

A reflection in four threads.

I. On what must change

Communication is an art, and Aruba the artist,
hands trembling mid-stroke, tracing fading silhouettes.
We cling to the façade that things are still in place,
but the quiet thread is unraveling everything.

We find ourselves in front of tomorrow,
without grasping that today has calcified.
Too busy putting out fires to notice the breakdown.
We speak of reform but fear repair.

There cannot be vision without sight.
How can we speak of a sustainable future
if we let fear keep us from who we've been?
We're frozen, yet still wanting to move.

A strong will burns in those who stitch with heart.
But if the top won't provide the thread or tools,
the seams won't hold: the intent to build is not there.
You cannot mend what you refuse to touch

II. On warnings and dreams

We're already in the middle of it,
busy, unknowingly weaving the silos.
A quiet warning, felt by the attentive,
but lost beneath the system's low murmur..

We call it a storm that will pass,
but it's not weather, it's design.
We're wearily curious, caught in between,
the static that keeps our minds elsewhere.

.

III. Surprises in the imagining

The imagining was not the surprise,
but the haunting traces of now.
Ghosts leave space for pondering,
but present cracks make our skin crawl.

We are at a standstill, leaning near the edge,
each step a thread - toward repair or fall.
Collapse doesn't always roar like thunder;
it's being woven quietly, after all.

IV. What I hope will be alive

We speak of the importance of heritage,
but treat memory as something to keep, not to give.
Our stories live in drawers, drafts, conversations in people,
yet we let them fade – too guarded to pass them on.

We've become our own silos,
stitched tight with fear and blind with haste.
But may our crioyo spirit continue to drive us,
each rhythm and flavor as part of our shared patchwork.

The Aruban agency was always the fight,
a sacred lucha beneath each breath.
The light and shadow walk hand in hand;
but when we rush ahead, we risk uprooting our foundation.

For those next in line to inherit,
we cannot talk of futures in governance
if we do not learn to weave old and new —
we'll lose the patchwork, each thread a story of our roots.

Marillis L.M Becker
Oranjestad, Aruba.

“**Weaving Our Own Silos**” is a quiet yet powerful reflection on how the future is shaped by the stories we choose to tell and the ones we silence. Marillis reminds us that progress is not only about innovation but also about honesty, dialogue, and care for one another. Her poem speaks of connection, culture, and community, urging us to listen more deeply and communicate with intention. It is both a love letter and a warning, reminding us that the strength of what we build depends on how we share and carry each other’s stories forward. Through her words, we are called to weave a future rooted in courage, empathy, and the rhythm of Aruba’s collective voice. **-Nihayla**

Threads of Memory, Visions of Tomorrow

FLOR

Artist Bio:

Quiana Cronie, an Aruban Designer, is dedicated to preserving her island's cultural richness through fashion and visual storytelling. Driven by a passion for reviving forgotten narratives, particularly those of fishermen and farmers. Quiana transforms these tales into upcycled, durable wearables and visuals, seamlessly bridging the gap between generations. She ensures that Aruba's heritage thrives for future generations, making her work a tribute to the island's vibrant traditions and narratives. Employing a multi-disciplinary approach, Quiana invites viewers to immerse themselves in the essence of Aruba's history, acting as a crucial link between the past and the present.

Work Artist Statement:

Cashaca Collection SS25 Sopi aw'i playa. Quiana Cronie presents the Cashaca collection, honoring the island's hardworking women, farmers, and fishermen. Inspired by traditional straight-cut shirts made from flour bags worn in the 1860s, this collection reimagines workwear for the modern era. Transforming salvaged cotton tablecloths from local hotels into durable pieces, each item reflects Aruba's rich cultural heritage and the wisdom of the proverb "come harinja, bisti bari" to eat the flour and wear the bag. Each outfit tells a unique story from Aruba, celebrating the everyday lives of those who wear them. Through this collection, I aim to weave narratives that connect audiences to Aruba's vibrant traditions, ensuring the island's legacy thrives for future generations. Quiana's multi-disciplinary approach serves as a bridge between past and present, sharing the essence of Aruba's history and culture with you.

I approach each outfit as a visual story. The narrative guides the choice of colors, shapes, and details as well as the photoshoot location and accessories. Through this process, every look evolves into a character. Some of these stories also highlight social or cultural themes relevant to Aruba, aiming to spark conversation. For example: a visual reflection on Aruba's fading cultural identity honoring traditions like salt harvesting and market life, while also confronting the impact of tourism and commercialization through imagery and upcycled materials.

1. If you imagine Aruba's cultural identity 50 years from now, what role do you hope your work will play in shaping or preserving it?

That's a great question, it really puts things into perspective. I aim to create visual booklets with digestible stories that could be used as educational tools, hoping they have a small but meaningful impact and a ripple effect on the new generation. I hope my work will act as a bridge between past and future, preserving Aruba's cultural identity while making it accessible to young people. Through storytelling, visual narratives, and wearable art, I aim to highlight the lives of fishermen, farmers, and everyday islanders, people whose contributions have shaped our culture but whose stories are often forgotten. By reviving these narratives in a contemporary and engaging way, I hope Aruba's heritage continues to inspire, educate, and influence future creatives, keeping the island's identity strong and celebrated for decades to come. I also feel it's urgent to reconnect with our roots today, especially as this connection may have been undervalued in recent years. In 50 years, I imagine I will not only be working in fashion but also expanding into other creative realms, continuing to tell stories and preserve cultural memory in new and evolving ways.

2. Your collections revive the stories of fishermen, farmers, and everyday islanders. How do you see these narratives guiding us toward more sustainable futures?

The narratives I explore are deeply connected to resourcefulness and sustainability. Historically, Arubans made garments from what they had available, like flour bags, demonstrating ingenuity and minimal waste. By reintroducing this mindset in a modern context, using upcycled materials like hotel tablecloths, my collections show that sustainability isn't just about materials, it's about how we approach creation, reuse, and storytelling. These garments encourage reflection on consumption, waste, and cultural respect, showing that honoring the past can guide us toward more mindful, environmentally conscious practices today.

3. How do you imagine future generations connecting with Aruba's stories through your wearable art?

Future generations can connect with Aruba's stories through wearable narratives that combine fashion, photography, video, and design. Each piece in the Cashaca collection embodies a story, complete with colors, patterns, accessories, and visual cues that reflect historical or cultural themes from salt harvesting to market life. Beyond clothing, I envision expanding into booklets, educational tools, and short films, providing engaging formats that are easy to absorb. By making these stories accessible and visually compelling, I hope to spark curiosity, reflection, and dialogue among young people, helping them understand and take pride in their heritage while seeing how it can inspire creative expression.

4. Your work transforms materials from the past into something new. In what ways does this process of upcycling reflect your vision of the future?

Upcycling is central to my vision because it blends sustainability, creativity, and cultural storytelling. By transforming salvaged materials like hotel tablecloths into garments, I continue a tradition of resourcefulness while giving new life to overlooked objects. This process reflects a future where creativity is intertwined with responsibility, where materials, stories, and culture are valued and reimagined rather than discarded. It's about planting new seeds: creating work that can endure, inspire, and spark dialogue about heritage, environment, and the possibilities of imaginative, sustainable design.

UN MUCHA DI JAMANOTA Y SU MUSICA

Artist Bio

Carl-Anthony Petrocchi ta un hoben musico di 15 aña. E ta miho conoci como Kalito.

Ken ta Kalito?

Kalito ta mi nomber artistico. Kalito ta un nomber di cariño cu mi a haña for di chikito di mi welanan. Nan ta yama'mi Kalito anto e a catch on. Awo tur hende ta yama'mi Kalito.

Dicon bo ta skirbi y canta na Papiamento?

Esaki ta mi idioma. E idioma di mi pais. Mi prome cantica cu mi a saca tawata Prome Amor. Prome Amor ta un genero di Urban Love. Urban love ta un tipo di musica manera un love song cu un tiki rap cu bo ta cantando pa un chick. Mientras tanto mi ta bezig cu e genero Corrido. Corrido ta un genero tradicional Mexicano cu awendia ta wordo combina cu Hip-hop y Trap. Mi ta kere mas tempo pasa, mi ta bay saca mas cantica na otro idioma. Pero pa awo, mi ta sigui canta na Papiamento.

Semper bo a gusta canta?

Di chikito mi a grow up ta wak mi ruman canta Pierewietje. Mi a bisa mi mama cu mi kier echt ta den Pierewietje. Mi kier a canta. Mi a cuminsa den Pierewietje, pero despues mi a wak cu tin un Tumba contest. Mi a gusta e Tumba Contest y a cuminsa participa. Mi a participa pa tres aña. Dos biaha mi a sali di dos luga y ultimo, e di tres biaha, mi a gana y haña e corona. Despues mi a cuminsa cu Festival di 18 di maart. Mi a participa anto esaki tambe mi a gusta. Mi a participa dos biaha. Prome biaha mi a sali di dos lugar y awo cu mi a haña edad, mi ta bay cuminsa traha muziek. Nos ta wak con cos ta bay.

Bo ta un hoben crioyo?

Ami ta considera mi mes un hoben crioyo. Crioyo den sentido di yega cas, bay wak kico mi wela a cushina merdia. Come un stoba. Hunga pafo tur ora. Hunga futbol den bario. Anochi mi ta bay cerca mi omonan grandi. Nos ta hunga domino bou palo. Mi ta gusta canticanan di cultura. Mi ta canta himno y nan por yamami pa cualquier evento cultural riba Plaza Betico.

Con abo ta mira e transformacion di genero?

Por ehempel awo Kompa ta zonando hopi, pero ya e genero di Kompa ta pasando. Kiermen, nos ta bay laga Kompa un banda pa un rato y ta bay pa un genero nobo. Pasco ta biniendo, carnaval y despues un genero nobo y asina e ta keda bay. Bo no por toca e mesun cantica pa tur hende pa un aña stret.

Conta mi un tiki over di Mucha di Jamanota?

Un dia Jeon a yama ami y bisa ami “Ey Kalito, bin mi cas un rato”. Nos a coy un cuarta y nos a scirbi Mucha Jamanota. E cantica ta basa riba mi bida. Mucha di Jamanota ta un Dansa. Dansa ta un tipo di cantica crioyo.

Nan sa bisa historia ta ripiti su mes. Con abo ta mira genero di musica den e frase ey?

Musica ta bay keda adapta y bira mas grandi. Mas sigur, despues di tempo, e generonan ta bay keda cambia y ban bisa, aki 10 aña ta bin bek y asina nos ta keda bay.

Con abo ta mira cultura aki 10 aña? Con cultura na Aruba lo transforma? Con abo ta imagina cultura na Aruba?

Mi ta mira cu cultura ta bai ta hopi mas moderno pasobra di technologia.

From Streets to Stories

UNESCO Aruba and Design Academy visualize Communication as a Public Good

When students from the Design Academy Aruba stepped into the streets, they weren't just observers, they became visual researchers, citizen journalists, and future makers. Their mission? To investigate how social and political messages reach Arubans in public spaces, and reimagine how they could do so more effectively. This collaboration between UNESCO Aruba's "Communication and Information as a Public Good" project and the Design Academy Aruba brought together citizenship education and digital design in a uniquely hands-on approach. Over several weeks, students moved beyond the classroom to document and analyze how public communication works in their island community.

The students explored Aruba's streets, neighborhoods, and civic spaces with fresh eyes and critical thinking tools. Armed with cameras, questions, and analytical frameworks, they mapped where posters, billboards, murals, and digital displays appeared across the island. They evaluated everything from color choices and typography to materials and weather resistance, asking crucial questions: Who is the target audience? Does the message reach them? What works and what could work better?

The documentation was just the beginning. The real creative challenge lay in translating their research into compelling visual narratives. Some students crafted infographics, transforming complex data about communication patterns into clear, engaging visual stories that honored UNESCO's visual identity. Others developed a comprehensive digital and print magazine, weaving together their own photography, interviews with community members, and analytical insights into a multi-page publication. This project demonstrates how communication and information truly function as public goods when communities actively examine and improve how messages reach citizens. The resulting work, infographics that make data accessible, magazines that tell deeper stories, represents more than student projects. These are prototypes for better civic communication, created by young people who understand that how we share information shapes how we build community.

By combining fieldwork, critical analysis, and professional design tools, students learned to bridge the gap between observation and innovation, developing the capacity to envision and shape how their community might communicate more effectively. Through this partnership with UNESCO Aruba, the Design Academy Aruba students functioned not just as designers, but as contributors to the public good.

The Aruba Youth Media Lab

The Aruba Youth Media Lab was created to give young people aged 11–16 the foundations of journalism and media literacy at a time when misinformation spreads faster than ever. Recent CBS data shows that children make up 27.9% of Aruba's population, and those aged nine and older already worry about issues such as stress, financial insecurity, discrimination, climate change, and mental health. Yet there is no youth-led media space where they can express these concerns or discuss topics that matter to them.

As a journalist and president of the first association of journalists on Aruba, I see how essential it is for youth to learn how to verify information, understand ethics, and tell stories responsibly. Because Aruba has few structured opportunities for young people to explore journalism, this participation program fills a real gap.

Through hands-on sessions in storytelling, photography, interviewing, fact-checking, and media production, participants learn how information is created and how to analyze it critically. They develop teamwork, confidence, and their own creative voice by selecting topics important to their generation, from food security and the impact of international conflict on Aruba to real piracy in the Caribbean, firework safety, and the issue of street animals and adoption.

The Aruba Youth Media Lab is an innovative partnership between media professionals and journalists designed to build a youth-led media hub. It empowers young people to inform a real audience while strengthening their media literacy skills. At the end of the program, they will launch their own youth news channel on YouTube. The impact is already visible.

One participant, Christopher Alexander, shared:

"I liked that the classes are very good for a beginner who wants to learn how to film and take photographs. I also liked working in a group. I want to further develop my skills in media."

Another participant, Zoë Saray Olmtak, said:

"I liked the brainstorm sessions we held as a group and also the part where we learned photography. I would like to learn more about taking pictures."

Melissa Stamper

Editor's note

Through the creation and editing of this book, Futures Literacy has transformed my view and created a new lens, with different meanings and perspectives for me. The value in collectively creating scenarios and expanding our horizons through creativity, foresight and innovation should be at the core and forefront of our community. These projects reflect the hope and vision of our youth, but also the endless possibilities and solutions that exist beyond the boundaries that we have created for ourselves. Once we allow our imagination to stretch beyond confinements, a playground of plausible futures opens up in front of our eyes. My hope is that collectively we strive towards planting the seeds for the co-creation of a future which the following generations will bloom in.

Stephanie Buckley
Designing our Future(S) - 2025

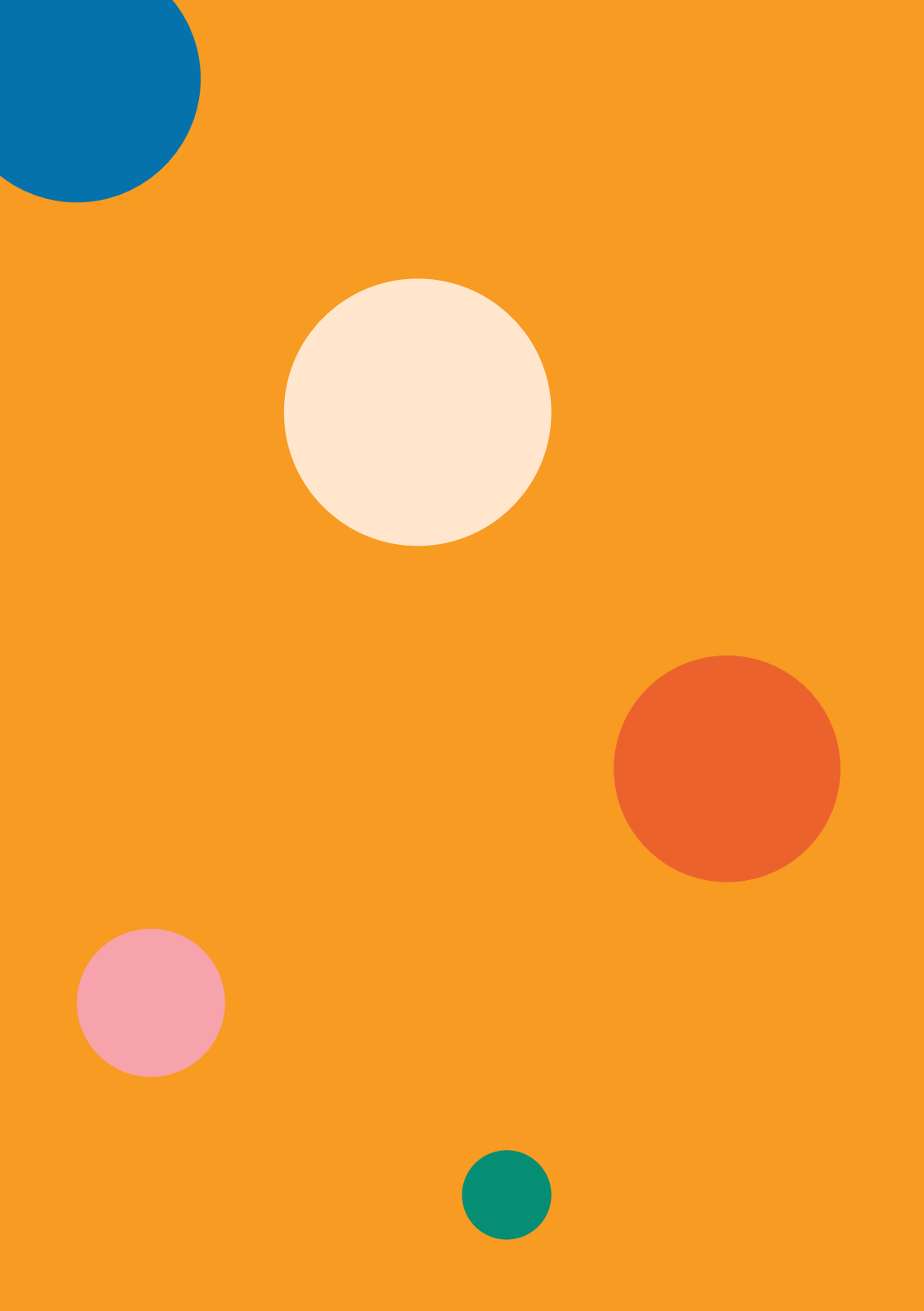
Thank you note

The creation of this book would have not been possible without the endless dedication and passion of our **Futures Team**. Thank you for your hard work, trust, belief and vision for our community: **Team UNESCO Aruba, Stephanie G.D. Croes, Nihayla Meyers, Stephanie Buckley, Edseline Gomez, Melissa Stamper, Quiana Cronie, Marillis Becker, Educampus, Emerging Communities, Design Academy Aruba, Sombre Media, Center for Lifelong Learning (UA), Academic Foundation Year (UA)/IPA.**

unesco Aruba National Commission

EduCampus

EMERGING TWENTY FIFTY



Message from UNESCO Aruba

The past year has filled me with a deep sense of energy and pride. Working with young people across Aruba, I have witnessed their clarity, their creativity, and their courage to express what truly matters to them. Their voices, their images, their poetry, their movements, and their ideas reveal not only potential, but direction. They remind us that investing in Meaningful Youth Engagement is not optional, it is essential for shaping the future we want.

I often think about the quiet lessons that come from spending time with older generations. Some of the most meaningful insights in my own life came from conversations with my grandparents. This is for me a reminder that wisdom is shared, not taught. Today, as we spend less time across generations, these moments feel even more precious. They show us how important it is to create spaces where different ages meet, listen, and build together.

We live longer, and young people engage with complex issues earlier. Even here in Aruba, the world's complexity is felt in daily life, asking all of us to navigate new questions with more awareness and shared responsibility. The future is no longer something handed down from one generation to the next; it is shared, shaped in the spaces where generations connect.

This is the essence of anticipatory governance: when we imagine together, we see more clearly the decisions we must make now. Futures thinking becomes a collective skill, accessible to everyone, a practice that can be used in classrooms, studios community centers, and daily conversations, not only in expert rooms.

Within UNESCO, Futures Literacy is anchored in the MOST Programme under the Social and Human Sciences sector. Yet its value is multisectoral: it can be applied in education, science, culture, communication, community development, policy design, and at different levels of abstraction, from everyday practice to long-term strategic thinking.

And every time our community gathers, whether to reflect on climate and cultural heritage, to balance economic growth with well-being, to confront misinformation, to strengthen the role of sport and mental health, or to support our emerging multicultual society, we influence the long term. That's why our choices matter so much!

This publication sits within that broader movement. It reflects creativity, reflection, and lived experience across the island, while throughout the week several UNESCO-funded projects within the Participation Program also reach their conclusion, each in their own way, through interactive presentations, community-driven showcases, or collective storytelling.

There is never just one future, there are many possible ones, shaped by the decisions we make and the scenarios we explore together. This publication offers a glimpse into how young people think, question, and create, and how their voices can strengthen our collective understanding of the paths ahead.

As the Aruba National Commission for UNESCO, we see this work as an invitation, and as guidance for institutions, schools, organizations, and communities. The insights gathered here can support the creation of spaces where young people and adults think alongside each other, where their perspectives become part of decision-making, and where intergenerational dialogue becomes a normal practice rather than an exception.

We encourage our partners to use this material, to reflect with it, and to allow it to inform the choices we make together.

Marushka S. Tromp | Secretary-General UNESCO Aruba | November 2025